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The meaning of the DISASTER

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by **CONSTANTINE K. ZURAYK**

translated from the Arabic

by **R. Bayly Winder**



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The Meaning of the Disaster

by

Constantine K. Zurayk

Translated from the Arabic

by

R. Bayly Winder

KHAYAT'S COLLEGE BOOK COOPERATIVE
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*This work is a complete translation of Ma'na
al-Nakbah by Constantine K. Zurayk. It is a
part of the Near Eastern Translation Program
of the American Council of Learned Societies.*

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The author of this little book, Dr. Constantine K. Zurayk, was born in Damascus, Syria, in 1909. After attending the Greek Orthodox School there, he went to neighboring Lebanon's American University of Beirut, by which he was granted his B.A. in 1928. In rapid succession he was granted the A.M. degree by the University of Chicago (1929) and the Ph.D. in Oriental Languages and Literatures by Princeton University (1930). He had just turned twenty-one at the time he received the latter. For the next fifteen years he was professor of Oriental History at his alma mater, the American University of Beirut.

The young Republic of Syria, which achieved its independence from France during 1944 and 1945, soon called on Dr. Zurayk, at that time one of a handful of its intelligentsia with firsthand knowledge of America, to play a leading role in its first diplomatic efforts. During 1945-1946 he was First Counselor in the Syrian Legation in Washington and in the following year became Syria's second Minister to the United States, as well as a high-ranking member of its delegation to the United Nations.

Despite the attractions and opportunities open to him in the diplomatic and political fields, Dr. Zurayk soon chose to return to his earlier calling—that of educating the youth of the Middle East at the American University of Beirut. In 1947 he resigned his post in Washington and went back to Beirut as vice-president of the University. In 1949 a new and different opportunity arose for him to serve his country, for he was asked to become Rector of the

Syrian University in Damascus. This national university of 5,000 students was founded in 1924 and is the only institution of higher education in Syria. During the three years of his tenure there, Dr. Zurayk strove to strengthen the bases of the university, and to deepen its influence on Syrian life. In 1952 he returned to his position in Beirut and was during the years 1954-1956 acting president of the American University. In 1951 he was elected to the Executive Board of UNESCO, and he is also a member of the UNESCO-sponsored International Commission for a Scientific and Cultural History of Mankind.

This recital of Dr. Zurayk's career, though not detailed, gives a clue to two important sides of his personality—the one as scholar and educator, the other as patriot. His major writings reveal the same division. On the scholarly side, in addition to his doctoral dissertation, a critical translation of Miskawayh's *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq wa-Tathir al-A'laq*, Dr. Zurayk has translated Theodor Noldeke's *Die ghassânischen Fürsten aus dem Hause Gafna's into Arabic* (as *Umara' Ghassan [with Pendali Jousé; Beirut, 1933]*), edited Isma'il Chol's *al-Yazidiyah, Qadim wa-Hadith* (Beirut, 1934), and edited volumes VII-IX of the *Ta'rikh of ibn-al-Furat* (Beirut, 1936-1942; vols. VIII and IX, Part 2 with Nejla Izzedin). On the patriotic side he has published *al-Wa'y al-Qawmi* (national consciousness; Beirut, 1936) and *Ma'na al-Nakbah*, the book here translated. Before turning to the latter, I would like to observe that Dr. Zurayk's warmth and integrity form a most important third aspect of his character—as all who know him will readily testify.

The translator does not intend to expatiate on the significance of *The Meaning of the Disaster*, for the reader is in a position to form his own judgment. However, a few observations may be made. The first Arabic edition ap-

peared in August, 1948, the second in October of the same year. The speed with which the first edition was exhausted is an indication of the interest that the book aroused in the Arab world. It is one of two Arabic books,¹ appearing in the wake of the Arab defeat in Palestine, which, while upholding with evident fervor the Arab point of view vis-à-vis Zionism and the establishment of the state of Israel, neither indulge in self-pity nor advocate extremism. Instead *The Meaning of the Disaster* frankly calls attention to those aspects of Arab life which in the final analysis were the most important cause of the "disaster" and outlines both a short-and long-range program for correcting them. It is perhaps because few Arabs were willing publicly to blame themselves that this book was so well received.

A translation of *The Meaning of the Disaster* seems worthwhile on several scores. Most important is that it makes available to the general public interested in the problem of Palestine an examination by an Arab of the causes and implications of what happened there—and there is all too little material with this point of view available in English. This little book sums up most of the feelings and attitudes of moderate Arab nationalists toward the problem. If these come as shock to some, translation may be justified on that basis alone. Certainly it is valuable for the West to have a clearer idea of what the more thoughtful people in the Middle East, an area whose importance most Americans have now come to realize, do in fact think about one of the most significant events which has taken place there since the rise and spread of Islam. In addition I hope that this translation will be of use both to students of the Arabic language, since the original provides an excellent text in modern literary Arabic, and to the growing

1. The other : Musa al-'Alami's *'Ibrat Filastin* (the lesson of Palestine ; Beirut, 1949). For an abbreviated translation see *The Middle East Journal*, vol. III, no. 4 (October 1949), pp. 372-405.

number of people interested in contemporary intellectual movements in the Middle East.

It should perhaps be emphasized that the book was written in 1948 immediately following the first cease-fire. I wish that this translation could have appeared sooner, but for various reasons both translation and publication were delayed. In any case I believe that the changes that have taken place throughout the Arab world since 1948, some of which lend the book an aura of prophecy, will not constitute more than a minor distraction.

This translation attempts to present the original Arabic in readable English and is neither laden down with critical apparatus nor narrowly consistent in the translation of words. On the former score, a background of current-events knowledge is assumed, although a few notes have been added where there seems to be genuine need for clarification.¹ In regard to translation, one may get some idea of what was done by realizing that the word struggle was used in various places, but not exclusively, to translate each of the following Arabic words: jihad, juhd, sira', kifah, and nidal. Conversely, in addition to struggle, at least two other translations, war effort and crusade, were used for jihad. The beginning of each page of the original text is indicated in the margin of this translation.

The list of those to whom I owe thanks is long, particularly for such a short book. The first debt is to the American Council of Learned Societies under whose auspices this work was translated. Thanks are also due to Dr. Philip K. Hitti, Mr. Farhat Ziadeh, and Dr. Irfan Kavar for having rescued me many times. Dr. Zurayk himself offered many emendations of great value, and other Arab

1. Footnotes indicated by asterisks were in the original; those indicated by numbers are either the author's (suggested by him on reading the translation) or the translator's and are followed by the appropriate initials.

friends helped me in minor ways. To all these I express my appreciation. The thankless job of proofreading devolved in part on Dr. Oleg Grabar. Special thanks are owed to Dr. D. W. Robertson, Jr. of the Department of English, Princeton University, to Dr. Howard Reed of the Ford Foundation, and to Mr. Richard Nolte of American Universities Field Staff, all of whom read the manuscript and offered valuable suggestions. Needless to say none of these gentlemen can be held responsible for any faults. Finally, my wife willingly became a "translating widow" on numerous evenings and to her I owe the largest—that of providing the atmosphere in which I can work.

Damascus, 20 July 1956

R. Bayly Winder

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FOREWORD AND DEDICATION

In this brief study of the tribulations of the Arabs in Palestine I do not claim either to have "invented gunpowder" (or, in the language of this age, "the atomic bomb"), or to have discovered a panacea for all our ills. It is simply, in this most acute crisis which imposes on every individual in the nation his share of duty and responsibility, an attempt to clarify my own thoughts. No doubt the first condition for properly fulfilling this duty is sound thinking and planning.

If this attempt benefits my compatriots, and especially the struggling nationalist groups among them, by removing some of the confusion which rules in our present atmosphere, I would seek no more. If it does not, then let its fate be that of the many superfluous publications which our presses issue today. In any case I hope that it will not misfire and cause harm where I desire usefulness and benefit. 4

With these feelings I dedicate this little study to all of my liberal, nationalist compatriots as a token of faith, of sharing, and of loyalty.

Constantine K. Zurayk

August 5, 1948

THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE DISASTER

- 5 The defeat of the Arabs in Palestine is no simple setback or light, passing evil. It is a disaster in every sense of the word and one of the harshest of the trials and tribulations with which the Arabs have been afflicted throughout their long history—a history marked by numerous trials and tribulations.

- 6 Seven Arab states declare war on Zionism in Palestine, stop impotent before it, and then turn on their heels. The representatives of the Arabs deliver fiery speeches in the highest international forums, warning what the Arab states and peoples will do if this or that decision be enacted. Declarations fall like bombs from the mouths of officials at the meetings of the Arab League, but when action becomes necessary, the fire is still and quiet, the steel and iron are rusted and twisted, quick to bend and disintegrate. The bombs are hollow and empty. They cause no damage and kill no one.

Seven states seek the abolition of partition and the subduing of Zionism, but they leave the battle having lost a not inconsiderable portion of the soil of Palestine, even of the part “given” to the Arabs in the partition. They are forced to accept a truce in which there is neither advantage nor gain for them.

History has not known a case more just or more obviously flawless than this: A country is snatched from its people to be made into a national home for remnants of mankind who settle on it from the various regions of the world and who erect a state in it despite its inhabitants and the

millions of their brethren in the neighboring regions. Despite the pure right of the Arabs' case, the potentialities of their land, and the interests that other nations have in it (interests which could have been used as bargaining points), the Arabs stand alone in the international arena. The great powers are hostile toward them, and world public opinion opposes them. They have no strong ally prepared to support them in such circumstances or to aid them in their struggle.

Four hundred thousand or more Arabs¹ are forced to flee pellmell from their homes. They have their wealth and property stripped from them and wander like madmen in what is left of Palestine and in the other Arab countries. They do not know what fate has in store for them, nor what means of livelihood they should seek. They wonder whether they will be forced to return to their homes, there to live under the Zionist shadow and to bear whatever abuse or scorn, assimilation or extinction the Zionists may impose on them.

In fact the situation is even worse than this! Dispersion has become the lot of the Arabs rather than of the Jews. Formerly the Arabs refused to recognize the right of the dispersed Jews, and Jewish committees went before international organizations trying to obtain a solution of their problem through the establishment of the Zionist home in Palestine. Now the Arab states are imploring these [same] organizations to return the dispersed Arabs to their [own] land, now under Zionist rule, and are making the fulfilment of that demand a condition for changing the "cease-fire" into a "truce."

1 Unfortunately much more. Because this book was written as the events and immediate consequences of the Palestine war were unfolding, the extent of the disaster, in terms of the number of refugees, could not be properly estimated. As of 15 December 1955 the number of refugees was 912,425 according to UNRWA statistics issued 16 April 1956 (mimeographed). — RBW

In short, the Zionist home in Palestine is today closer to realization than ever before. On the other side, the very being of the Arabs has never before known such fragmentation and collapse as in this battle.

In addition to the material collapse is the collapse of values which is shown [in various ways. It is shown] by the doubt of the Arabs in their governments and by their accusations of their leaders and rulers, even by the doubt of many of them in themselves and in their potentiality as a nation. [It is also shown] by the despair in their breasts, by their refusal to meet the danger, and by their shrinking before the magnitude of the blow. Indeed, this moral and spiritual relapse is more important than the material loss, no matter how great the latter might be; for if the resolution of a people crumbles and its confidence in itself is lost, it loses the best that it possesses and is impotent to rise after a fall or to shake from itself the dust of humiliation and defeat.

- 8 These are some aspects of the disaster which has overtaken the Arabs in this battle of the Palestine war. These and others, which are on the tips of all tongues, which throb in all hearts, and which every one of us sees and hears [cited] in these critical days, are sufficient to indicate the seriousness of the trial and the intensity of the tragedy.

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However, in all justice we must hasten to say that the causes of this calamity are not all attributable to the Arabs themselves. The enemy confronting them is determined, has plentiful resources, and great influence. Years, even generations, passed during which he prepared for this struggle. He extended his influence and his power to the ends of the earth. He got control over many of the sources of power within the great nations so that they were either forced into partiality toward him or submitted to him.

Whenever he mustered his force against one of these powers, he appropriated many of its interests and wore it down as both the ancient and modern history of great world powers in fact shows. What then could one expect when this enemy attacked a people just beginning to awaken, a people still in the first stage of their social and political development, a people who for centuries had remained subjugated by a tyrannical rule which almost stripped them of their essence and who, having rid themselves of this oppressive rule, were still trying to extract their liberty and independence from the strongest and most influential nations in the world? Zionism does not only consist of those groups and colonies scattered in Palestine; it is a world-wide net, well prepared scientifically and financially, which dominates the influential countries of the world, and which has dedicated all its strength to the realization of its goal, namely building a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine.

9

It is, therefore, our duty to acknowledge the terrifying strength which the enemy possesses and to take it into account when we view our present problem and try to remedy it. Indeed the worst thing which has afflicted us in recent years is that while we have expatiated to others on the evidence of this strength and on its dangers, we have ourselves minimized it and overlooked its daily increasing pressure. Then when the battle broke out, our internal propaganda began to tell us about imaginary victories and to benumb the Arab peoples with the easiness of our military struggle and our ability to overcome and conquer—until the disaster struck, accompanied by a bitter reaction. It is to be hoped that one of the good things to come out of this violent shock will be that it will return us to reality, and rouse us to the facts of the situation, and help us properly to assess the matter and to make provision for it.

I have said that it is our duty to acknowledge the terrifying strength of the enemy and not to blame ourselves more than is justified. It is also right, and a duty, to acknowledge our mistakes, to see clearly the sources of weakness in our being, and to know the extent of our responsibility in this calamity which has afflicted us. The worst of all evils would be for us to shirk our responsibility, to blind ourselves to the extent of our shortcomings, and to place the blame on this or that external thing without seeing the weakness, the defects, and the corruption within. How often we hear amongst us today abuse of the Jews, reviling of the British, the Americans, the Russians, the Security Council, the United Nations mediator—of all who stand in opposition to us in this struggle. There is no doubt that these have been, and are, hostile to us; and it is necessary for us to warn them, to remember the position each one has taken, and to settle our account with them whenever the opportunity occurs and sufficient strength has been achieved. There is no doubt that we must charge each of them with his responsibility before history and that we must confront him with it to the extent that we are able. There is no doubt that we must preserve this—all of it—in our hearts, make our children and our grandchildren understand it, and take it into account in planning our policies and managing our affairs. At the same time we must not forget that policies still rest on strength and self-interest and that all of these nations pursue their own interests first. In the present disaster it is not enough to unmask others and charge them with their share of the responsibility if we have not first unmasked our own weak points and charged ourselves with the consequences and the fate that our own faults have caused. Refusing to face reality and blaming others is a dangerous evil in ordinary times; in times of trials and misfortunes it is the very source of evil and of mischief. Such times are the best

for taking stock of oneself, for discovering one's own weak points, and for taking action to cure them, or at least for making a beginning of it.

When we view this disaster and appraise its extent and its results, it is also right and fair for us to know that it is only one battle in a long war. If we have lost this battle, that does not mean that we have lost the whole war or that we have been finally routed with no possibility of a later revival. 11

This battle is decisive from numerous points of view, for on it depends the establishment or extinction of the Zionist state. If we lose the battle completely, and the Zionist state is established, the Jews of the whole world will no doubt muster all their strength to preserve, reinforce, and expand it, as they mustered their strength to found it. But history is full of surprises; a being imposed by force and not based on the laws of nature and society cannot last when confronted by living natural forces moving in the stream of history.

There is, therefore, no justification for letting despair overcome us, paralyze our efficiency, and take away our confidence in ourselves and in our nation as it has done to many of us; for despair was the cause of that collapse of spiritual values which, as I have said, is a more serious danger and more to be feared than the material loss and the military defeat. We must in fact prepare for tomorrow carefully, make provision for the coming battle, and learn from our enemies how to take the long-range view, how to achieve well-knit organization, how to plan our course of action, and how to advance steadily over a period of years, even generations, in order to achieve what we seek and attain our goal. How many disasters have overtaken the Jews in their history! Indeed how often has their existence in Palestine been exposed in recent years to collapse and ex-

tion! But they continued to be patient in the face of obstacles, to bear misfortunes, and to keep their eyes on the fixed goal until they reached that degree of strength and boldness which they have today attained.

- 12 By advocating that we take far-reaching action and that we view the war in its entirety instead of confining ourselves to the present battle, I do not mean that we should merely await the course of events and depend on favorable circumstances. No! Optimistic reliance on some inevitable success which depends on favorable circumstances is no better than the overpowering pessimism and paralyzing despair which the present defeat has caused. Each is an escape from reality and, either consciously or unconsciously, is a renunciation of the responsibility and the duty which falls on us.

By long-range view and action I mean care and planning on a wide scale for a long period. I mean facing reality as it is, specifying the goal we seek, having a well-laid plan for attaining our aim, and implementing the plan day after day—without despair or any of the various other types of escapism. This is the course which history has outlined for victory in wars, for building states, and for bringing nations into being.

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I hope that, in the above discussion, I have hit on the truth in describing our present disaster in Palestine and that I have made clear its seriousness and gravity, and the intensity with which it now afflicts us and will afflict us in the future. I also hope that I have pictured the disaster as it really is and that I have outlined the course which we must take in relation to it and the viewpoint from which we must look at it, for this is the necessary first step in analyzing a problem and studying the ways of solving it.

THE DUTY OF THE THINKER

One of the worst effects which trials and tribulations have on nations is [internal] dissension and wrangling among both individuals and groups. Because of the intensity of their affliction these appear stupefied and lost. They now have this opinion and now that of the road to salvation. They follow any guide who claims leadership. 13

As a result of the disaster which befell the Arabs of Palestine, something of this sort has happened to the mass of the Arab people, even to the leaders of opinion and the cultured groups among them. The fact is that not only were hundreds of thousands of the people of that unfortunate country scattered from their homes, and not only do they wander about helplessly, but also their thoughts and their opinions, as well as the thoughts of their compatriots throughout the area, have been scattered and forced to wander. There has spread among them a babel of opinions about which the least that can be said is that it is a warning of greater evil [to come] if it is not eliminated and if clear thinking and a unified will do not take its place. 14

The various accusations which are heaped now on one [individual or group] and now on another and which pour forth in every direction are one of the manifestations of this babel. As a result you see people divided into parties, allying themselves with one of the Arab states against another, and attacking one or another of the leaders. They busy themselves with such things rather than with thinking about the common enemy and the common grave misfortune.

Likewise we disagree in the interpretation of the disaster and in the analysis of its causes. Some of us refer it back to the lack of propaganda for our just case, others to the inadequacy of our military preparations, still others to the divergent views and actions taken by our Arab states, or to other points of weakness within us.

15 This babel appears in a special way among the ranks of the politically conscious youths, who are ready for action, prepared to give their very existence in the service of their country, and ready to share the burdens of their nation. These youths look into themselves and into their past. They examine what action they have taken, what parties they have attempted to found, and what efforts they have exerted in the service of the general cause. They find, however, that none of these efforts has achieved the sought-after goal. None has been able to ward off the calamity or to satisfy the yearnings or the insistent ambition of these youths to serve and liberate their nation. They ask what they must do to prevent the present evils and to defend against future dangers. They do not find before them a clear path or a designated method. Thus they flail around aimlessly in various directions, look now here and now there, and for the most part their thinking turn in a vicious circle—without any positive result or tangible effect.

This group of young men—wide-awake, groping for the path of duty, prepared for action and sacrifice, and burning to serve their country—is the treasure of this nation and its provisions for the future. Today, the minds of these youths are disturbed, their thoughts divided, and their wills shattered. Sit in any of their assemblies; you will see this disturbance prevailing, and you will feel the painfully violent confusion about interpreting the present situation and seeking the paths to salvation.

One cannot dispute the fact that this confusion is not

an unmitigated evil, for it indicates introspection, stock-taking, and spiritual suffering—all of which may open up new roads for the future. As suffering arouses strength in the soul and urges it to greater exertion and more intense effort, so introspection is the first step toward intellectual progress.

However, the introspection and suffering may be squandered and go for nothing, or even revert to evil and malevolence, for introspection may lead to perplexity and loss, and suffering may lead to killing despair or destructive negativism. This result may come to pass unless enlightened thought intervenes and distinguishes right from wrong, positive elements from negative, factors of strength and hope from factors of weakness and disappointment and at the same time supports the former over the latter and redirects the latter in such a way as to preserve the nation and maintain its confidence in itself. 16

These then are the functions of conscious thought in this catastrophe, or in fact in any crisis. It should shoulder the leadership of opinion in the midst of disturbance and perplexity. It should throw light on the disordered situation, explain it as it really is, and distinguish between its various elements and facets. The function of this kind of thought is also to separate causes from results [giving primacy to the former over the latter], to distinguish underlying causes from immediate ones, the essential from the contingent, and thus to give to everything its rightful importance and to evaluate it properly in any complicated and knotty operation.

Having made these distinctions, conscious thought then addresses itself to a description of the methods of cure. It treats the immediate causes with an immediate remedy and directs against the long-range causes a broad, long-range course of action, and so neither attaches the

same degree of importance to outward appearances as to underlying factors nor gives to contingencies [the emphasis] which must be given to essentials.

17 Perhaps the men of action and those who bear great responsibilities may not be pleased with the thinker's shouldering of such a task; and their position will be justified if the thought is of that abstract type which is not rooted in reality or if the thinker is not aware of his responsibility and does not evaluate it properly. Then they will have the right to say, "War through a telescope is easy," and to look askance at the thinker and to make light of him. Further, that type of thinking will justify such an opinion and will in fact deserve to fail on its own, regardless of the view and attitude of the men of action.

In fact, that awareness of responsibility which in this desperate situation is incumbent on every single individual in the nation, but especially on its thinkers, was in itself the incentive for writing this little study, which incentive, I hope, redeems whatever errors or weaknesses that it may contain. As long as it emanates from this awareness and is armed with the weapon of good intention, it will not fear censure or blame for showing up error, for delimiting responsibility, for uncovering the roots of the present calamity and for frankly and strongly advocating their removal. Perhaps it will have some value in throwing light on the road to salvation and in stimulating the mind and the soul toward that road.

THE IMMEDIATE REMEDY

We have said that the disaster of the Arabs in Palestine—like other analogous historical events—has both immediate and underlying causes. Thought must distinguish between these two types of causes and make clear the type of remedy which suits each and which ensures its mastery and elimination.

Therefore, let us first examine the immediate causes so that we may ascertain the action necessary to cope with the present destructive danger, to stand in the face of it, and to prevent being overcome by it—even if it is not now possible to destroy it completely and definitively.

However, we must first realize that the distinction between immediate and underlying causes is not absolute, 19 for in many cases the former are only symptoms of the latter, fruits growing from its seeds. Human life is not a simple matter which can be partitioned, organized, and artificially compartmentalized. Thus, the path of the immediate remedy is not independent of the path of the fundamental, underlying remedy. Rather, it is bound up with it and derived from it. The thinker or the reformer must undertake the two duties together and view them as one. He should not neglect the relationship between them, but should apply himself to each, while keeping his eye simultaneously on the other, with wisdom, prudence, and good management and organization.

It is of course impossible in this study to try to treat the details, with all their ramifications, of either the immediate or the underlying remedy, especially since those

details can be seen as parts of a whole and go back, along with their ramifications, to principles which join and unify them.

What are those principles on which the immediate remedy should be based, and what are the fundamental pillars on which it should rest?

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The fundamental principles of this remedy—of this crusade, rather—are in my opinion five: The first of them is to strengthen the sense of danger and to sharpen the will to fight. Here is the first step and the most basic factor. Some may consider the statement to be mistaken or irresponsible. And why shouldn't they! when the columns of our press deluge us with articles which itemize the Zionist danger and warn us against it, when speeches on this subject are incessantly heard everywhere, and when the topic of Zionism and its evils are on almost every lip and tongue?

In reality, despite these statements and actions, the Arab masses, and even a large segment of the educated classes, continue to be far from having a sufficient awareness of the great danger which Zionism represents for every country in the Arab world. They have not been shown in a concrete way the various aspects of this danger to the sources of their livelihood, even to their very existence. Despite the displaced thousands they have seen and the news of destruction, killing, mutilation, and other awful things they have heard, they have not perceived the true extent of Zionism, its world-wide strength, its goal of conquest and annihilation, and its naked cruelty in realizing this goal. They have not perceived the intensity of the hidden yearning in the breasts of the Jews, a yearning which has been increasing throughout the ages, to found their own state in Palestine, or the extent to which the

flower of their youth has in recent years been saturated with Nazism and other "isms" which encourage domination and conquest. Finally, the Arab masses do not understand how much the Jews look at the Arab countries, which are rich in resources and occupy a central position in the world, as a field for their national expansionist struggle.

But leave the masses of the people aside. Do we not see that some of our rulers and of the pillars of our Arab states give to problems of their individual states a priority equal to, or even higher than, that which they give to the Zionist problem, thus allowing themselves to be distracted from remedying the greater, more inclusive danger by attaching undue importance to the lesser, temporary danger? Neither the problem of the Sudan, nor the Portsmouth treaty, nor the Syro-Lebanese currency question, nor any other such problem is as far-reaching or as dangerous as Zionism, because the imperialism and enslavement represented by these problems, no matter how long they may last nor how deep their roots may be, are a temporary evil. The aim of Zionist imperialism, on the other hand, is to exchange one country for another, and to annihilate one people so that another may be put in its place. This is imperialism, naked and fearful, in its truest color and worst form. On this basis it is not right that we should be distracted from it even by those national problems which have worried, and still worry, our governments—to say nothing about petty politics, harmful gossiping, partisan rivalries, and local desires. All of these shameful tendencies should have disappeared and been put aside during this critical situation and in the face of this imminent danger.

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We hear and read in the press much about the need for propagandizing our case in foreign countries. Although there is some truth in this statement, the thorough observer

will see that in addition to this foreign propaganda we must organize domestic propaganda at home and that our need for the one is not less than our need for the other—indeed, it may be greater and more compelling.

22 The important thing in this internal summons is that it should make clear to the Arab mind and the Arab soul that the Zionist danger is the greatest danger to the being of the Arabs. The other dangers either threaten some limited part of their being or else they include both the Arab world and the rest of the world. This danger threatens the very center of Arab being, its entirety, the foundation of its existence. All other [dangers] are simple in relation to it and may, for the sake of repelling this most serious and all-important danger and for the sake of preserving one's self from it, be endured, or at least have their solution postponed.

This fact is what must be placed before the Arab people, and it must be supported by facts and figures. This is what must be made clear to the minds of our rulers and of the public. This is what we must sum up by incisive ideas and judicious phrases, and what we must teach our children and the students of our schools day and night. The departments of propaganda in our governments must first devote themselves to this, employing the press, the radio, and every other means of publicity, in order to intensify in the souls of all Arabs an awareness of the danger—of the greatest, the unique, danger—so that every thought which we have and every action which we perform will be influenced by this feeling and will issue from it. When this awareness grows strong, the will to struggle, which unfortunately is still weak among us, will grow with it. Our struggle in this battle was, in general, the struggle of an effete dilettante and not the struggle of one ready to die—as though only lip service and not actual obligations were involved.

This mobilization of feeling and will is, in my opinion, the first fundamental principle of the present struggle to repel the grave Zionist danger. 23

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The second fundamental principle is material mobilization in all fields of action, that is, marshalling the complete military strength of the nation and directing it into the field of combat. Some may say that the Arab states are still young, with small, ill-equipped armies and that the problems and dangers which they face both within and without do not allow them to put all their military resources into the field. There is some truth in this. However, it is difficult to believe that these seven states could not muster up more than they did muster, or that they would not be able—if they had true perception of the danger and will for self-defense and if the course of action were judicious and the planning proper—to build a military force much stronger than that which they sent into the field and which was incapable of standing before the Zionists. It is in truth a shame and a disgrace that the Arab states—and their millions about whom we continuously brag—appeared with this pitiful number of troops, impotent to level the strongholds of Zionism or even to hold firm before them. If the Zionists, within their narrow geographical limits, have been able to equip themselves so abundantly and so extensively, then certainly the Arabs, within the broad expanse of their territories, which are open to both East and West, are not unable to import through legal or illegal channels what they need, or at least that which will make them militarily stronger than they were, assuming that their previous effort was the best of which they were [then] capable. Although we should recognize the abundance of Zionist resources and the awe-inspiring financial and political forces which support them; 24

nevertheless, the potentialities of the Arab states from these points of view are not small either, if they are properly exploited, highly organized, and soundly managed.

Next to military mobilization stands that nerve-center, economic mobilization. I do not believe that the Arab peoples, if they understood the reality of the danger, would hold back from any sacrifice necessary for this mobilization. It was truly saddening that the Arab defenders were in need of the most primitive of medicines and medical instruments and that their leaders had to direct their steps toward Beirut, Damascus, and the other Arab centers in order to seek some of the fundamental things that they needed. It is difficult to imagine that such things were lacking at a time when all responsible governmental and popular quarters knew that we were about to enter a war, when indeed they themselves were threatening war. It was highly regrettable to see those leaders knocking on various doors—now getting what they wanted and now failing to get it—with no one specified authority concerned with at least this aspect of the struggle.

25 How painful are those observations which we hear from foreign visitors and witnesses who had come to the Arab countries at the time of the fighting and who did not see in them any sign of real war, but who saw instead thousands of automobiles gluttonously devouring one of the most important materials of war, and who watched the people busying themselves with pastimes and pleasures, parties and social activities, just as they had done previously. The war, launched by their state and the other Arab states, made no change in their habits, nor did it prevent them from having any of their pleasures. When one of us heard, or hears, the observations of these critics, be they sincere or not, he finds himself incapable of replying. He only feels deep shame inside.

Along with military and economic mobilization goes political mobilization. Internally this involves unifying the goals and policies of the Arab states; externally, winning the support of foreign states. There is no denying that the Arab politicians have done their best in regard to the former. Perhaps they cannot go farther than they have, as long as greed and the interests of dynasties and individuals continue to hold sway and as long as public opinion in the Arab world has not awakened and strengthened itself to a degree which would make it possible to put enough pressure on the selfseeking to strip them of their ambitions before they, and their ambitions, crumble and go to utter destruction.¹

The Arab politicians have also made an attempt at political action in the foreign field. They have sent delegations, communicated with the representatives of foreign states, and disseminated their propaganda at international conferences, but their efforts in this respect have been scattered and irresolute. In this field there is still plenty of room for action. Recently the Arab League has become aware of this fact, for according to the press, it has called upon some of its leaders to undertake a strong political effort in western Europe before the opening of the United Nations Assembly this coming September. Our attempts are always thus: not carried out through a well-laid, far-reaching plan, but improvised at the last moment.

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I will treat relations with the great powers in the fifth section of this chapter. However, there are other states with whom relations must be strengthened, such as the Latin American States. Despite the fact that most of these nations are subservient to American influence and Zionist pressure, it is not right to neglect them or give them up entirely. There are also the Asian nations further to the

1. Cf. Koran (Calvo, 1347), 15 : 23. — RBW

east who share with us the dangers of Western imperialism, who have looked with favor on our case and have assisted us, and with whom we must strengthen our relations in order to make this assistance secure and to fortify it. It is unfortunate that our ties with these nations are still weak, and do not on the whole go beyond contact between our delegations and theirs at international conferences at times when the danger becomes acute and when other powers ally themselves against us.

27 So much then for what concerns political relations with governments and the mobilization of Arab strength in that respect. However, there is the further matter of popular propaganda and of directing it towards public opinion in these states. In this matter the efforts of the Arab states have been very feeble and have come from different sources; sometimes from the League itself, sometimes from the individual states, and sometimes from the Arab Offices,¹ though in whose name these latter spoke is not completely clear. These efforts should have been strengthened, intensified, co-ordinated, and united in order to make them fruitful and effective. However, popular propaganda will not, no matter how much it is strengthened and intensified, have any immediate effect in the present battles because the time is short and the danger imminent; the influencing of public opinion so that it may in its turn influence governments is a long-term operation. Thus, although we do need to strengthen and extend this propaganda in preparation for coming battles and the long-range war, yet most of our effort in the present battle must be expended on contacts with the governments themselves, on speaking the language of self-interest not the language of right and justice, and on mobilizing all our strength for bargaining. This mobilization of our political

1. On the Arab (information) Offices, consult J. C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine* (New York, 1950), pp. 228-9. — RBW

strength must be organized and go hand in hand with the mobilization of our military and economic resources—and in fact of all aspects of our life. This course must be taken if we want to escape and survive. Conversely, to underestimate and disregard this general mobilization will lead us to a state worse than that to which it brought some of the great European powers in the recent war. There is no question but that the source of such underestimation is what we referred to above, namely, inadequate perception of the danger and an insufficiently developed will to struggle.

War today has become total war, not confined to troops in the field of battle, but involving all the people; not content with some of the resources of the nation, but demanding the mobilization of them in their totality. Our enemies have understood this fundamental attribute of modern war, and thus they have made suitable provisions and have dedicated to it all of their resources in all fields.

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This is our duty at the present time, and we must set ourselves to this kind of mobilization. If it forces us to halt projects for reform and for building up our countries internally, and even if we have to divert to the war effort appropriations for public works, education, and agriculture, in fact all the income of the Arab states—above the minimum necessary for living—so be it! Roads, buildings, schools, UNESCO¹, parties and banquets will be of no value if the Zionists win a clear-cut victory in this battle, establish their state, and sink their fangs into the body of the Arab nation.

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Further, it is obvious that this mobilization in each of the Arab states will not suffice unless there is a longer range unity than that reached in the earlier stages of the battle.

1. At the time this was written the Lebanese Government was making elaborate preparations for the General Conference of UNESCO in Beirut. — CZ

Therefore, the third basic principle in the present crusade is the greatest possible unification among the Arab states—in the fields of war, politics, economics, etc. No doubt this unification is, as we have already said, limited by the general situations in these states and by their own interests, ambitions, and fears. It will not be possible to bring about this unification in any real sense unless there are far-reaching, comprehensive changes. Unification, therefore, enters into the sphere of the fundamental solution of the Palestine problem (and of the Arab problem in its entirety), which we will cover in the next chapter.

29 However, while awaiting this fundamental and far-reaching solution, every possible measure must be taken to ensure as much co-ordination and unity as possible in the efforts of the Arab states. I do not believe that a single Arab, who enjoys the least power of observation or thought, has been taken in by the speeches and declarations of our politicians after the meetings of the Political Committee [of the Arab League] to the effect that the Arab states have never at any time been more completely in agreement than they now are, and that the Arab League has never been stronger than it is in this difficult situation. Actually, one might guess from the mere quantity of these declarations that they are indicative of a certain weakness and disunity, the spread of which frightens [their authors] and the concealment of which they therefore desire, and that the League has not yet acquired sufficient power or strength to enable it to impose on its members a strong unity of thought and action.

How many times did the general staffs of these states meet during the battle? or in the four-week truce during which we slept on a feather bed while the enemy was busy organizing day and night? One wonders whether our military leadership was resolute about its business, whether

it organized its efforts, and agreed on the steps to be taken. Is not the best indication of weakness the fact that we heard every day four or five communiques rather than a single one? Must we not so standardize the organization and weapons of the Arab armies that it will be possible for an Arab soldier to serve in any one of them according to the need?

Is it not possible to create in the field of politics a less cumbersome and more efficient technique for co-ordination and unification than the Political Committee, which is for the most part composed of the heads of government of the Arab states, who rush to it now and then, although each bears heavy responsibilities which pull him back to his own country? Is it not possible to create in a single place a permanent and continuous committee entrusted with the organization and execution of the total effort by the light of a single policy laid down by the governments?

In the field of economics the League's Economic Committee, which in this critical situation ought to have been the instrument for organizing and co-ordinating the economic and financial aspects of the war, has not uttered a whisper. Nor does any one know whether it has actually been formed and brought into existence, or whether it still exists only on paper.

The same situation exists in the field of propaganda. One would assume the achievement of agreement and unity in this field above all others—it being the foremost symbol of the Arab states' struggle and the outward index of their firmness and of the steadfastness of their intentions. The fact is exactly contrary to the assumption. The Arab Higher Committee¹ has its delegations, and the Arab Office² has

1. On the Higher Arab Committee, consult Hurewits, *op. cit.*, *passim*. — RBW

2. See above, p. 20, n. 1. — RBW

31 its branches. In fact during the most delicate phases of the problem representatives of these two organizations existed simultaneously both in New York and London. Their efforts were not co-ordinated; in fact the reverse was true—they held aloof from each other, competed, and quarreled. No doubt the individual members of these delegations and of their counterparts who were sent to other countries exerted the utmost effort of which they were capable, but in the end the lack of unity, the overlapping of authority, and the absence of responsibility paralyzed and nullified their work and even brought about results contrary to those desired.

I have said that this unification which we seek in the fields of war, politics, economics, propaganda, etc., is linked to the circumstances and present situation in the Arab states and that unification cannot rise above the level of this situation. Unification is the consequence and the fruit; the existent Arab being is the determinant and the root. However, the danger is great and imminent. Because of this fact, it is not possible to wait for that fundamental transformation in the Arab situation which will ensure the basic and necessary unity capable of guarding the Arab being and defending it from misfortune. Therefore, those in power and those who bear responsibility in the Arab states must place the general goal before particular goals; and public opinion in the various Arab lands must continuously urge co-ordination and unification, must exert as much pressure as possible in this direction, and must rebel at every division in the Arab front so as to overcome to the greatest extent possible the obstacles which today confront Arab security and thus protect the being of the Arabs in this battle.

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The fourth fundamental principle in the present Arab

crusade is the participation of popular forces. The struggle must not be limited to governments and regular armies, but it must extend to all classes of society so that every individual in the nation will undertake his share of it. 32

It will of course be said that modern warfare is not like old fashioned war, that it demands types of training and discipline in the use of the mechanical weapons of war, of which no irregular soldier is capable, and that such a soldier may on many occasions hamper military operations instead of helping and strengthening them.

However, the experience of the nations in the recent world war, in which the largest, most violent, and most complicated weapons were employed, indicates that popular forces, if their organization is good, can be a powerful support to regular armies, and that in fact they may on some occasions give the decisive blow. This conclusion was proved by popular struggles in Poland, Russia, the Balkans, France, and other states both large and small. It was proved that the attachment of peoples to the soil, their tenacity for the land of their fathers and grandfathers, and their defense of their families and honor, that all these qualities inspire them with a courage, and a willingness to face sacrifice and death, which compensate for the more thorough training of the organized armies, and in fact strengthen the spirit of resistance in these armies and in the entire nation.

Why, however, do we look far afield when the enemy before us gives us the best indication and the most eloquent proof of the contention? In his struggle did this enemy limit himself to organized armies, or did he infuse the struggle through the totality of the Zionist people—among its men and its women, in its various communities [throughout the world] and colonies [in Palestine]—so that the individual felt himself to be a unit in the fighting body, and 33

therefore both defended and attacked with every bit of power and life that he had? If this is the way with the aggressor, how would it be with the victim of aggression, defending his land, his blood, and his honor?

It will also be said that the Arabs of Palestine have proved themselves weak and impotent; that no sooner had the first bombs fallen than they fled in utter rout, evacuated their cities and their strongholds, and surrendered them to the enemy on a silver platter; that a large number of them had fled even before the battle and had taken refuge in the other Arab countries and in remote regions of Palestine.

I do not deny that cowardice and disintegration have appeared among the Arabs, in Palestine and elsewhere, but this sweeping accusation is ill-founded and is repudiated by the total history of this people, with their record of natural bravery and of courage and sacrifice in battle. It is likewise repudiated by the successive revolts which this people has undertaken during the last thirty years against the oppressive power [of the occupation] and by its attack on Zionism. It is also repudiated by the wealth and resources which the sons of its villages and towns have devoted, at the highest of prices, to the purchase of weapons and munitions for the defense of their existence, and by the valor they have shown and the victories they have achieved in the "Liberation Armies,"¹ in the "Holy Crusade" [forces],² and in fact wherever they have had a share in the leadership and organization.

No indeed! The cause is not to be found in the people themselves, but in the leaders who did not train or arm them, who in fact did not even facilitate their at-

1. *Juyush al-Inqadh*, volunteer Arab forces under the command of Fawsi al-Qawuqji; consult Hurewitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 310, 313. — RBW

2. *Al-Jihad al-Muqaddas*, irregular troops under the command of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husayini; consult Hurewitz, *loc. cit.* — RBW

tempts to arm themselves or indicate to them a course of action in their struggle. Are there not among the thousands of young Arabs, both educated and uneducated, a few who could be prepared for this mass struggle and who could act as a leaven for spreading the spirit of this struggle throughout the whole nation? Is it not a disgrace and a shame that a large group of the educated youth of the country casts about and searches for a course of action by which to contribute its share in the war effort—and finds none? Is it not a sign of weakness and defeatism that it is impossible, or next to impossible, to volunteer?

Let this be a warning to those who distrust the people and oppose popular participation in the struggle, for thereby they give up one of the fundamental elements in the crusade, and in fact they choke off the spirit of the struggle at its source. In any case, even though this spirit may weaken for a time, it will inevitably rise. It will perhaps first revolt against those who have repressed it. Then it will be released in all parts of the nation so that it can transform the crusade to preserve the Arab being and defend the fatherland into a total crusade in the real sense of the word.

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The readiness of the Arabs to bargain and to sacrifice some of their interests in order to repel the larger danger must be another fundamental principle in the present Arab crusade to protect Palestine, for we must realize that we have not yet attained that degree of strength and power which will permit us to obtain all our demands and guarantee all our interests in one full swoop. We are compelled to sacrifice some things for the sake of others. At the same time the great nations have in our country important interests over which we can bargain in order to obtain our goals, for in an age in which the lives of nations are

interwined it is impossible for any one nation to solve its problems independently of other nations and without exchanging interests and assets.

However, this exchange must not take place without conditions, which, if not fulfilled, would nullify the profit sought and would in fact transform it into evil and loss. One of these conditions is that the exchange should not be motivated by feeling, "traditional friendship," or "natural alliance," for in most cases these are only snares and traps which conceal greed and mask exploitation and colonization. The only basis for this exchange in the world of current international transactions is self-interest, nothing else. Thus another condition is that the price of any interest that is conceded must be the safeguarding of a corresponding interest. For instance we should not ally ourselves with the democratic states against the Communist states or persecute leftist parties in our country for no benefit or for the sake of friendship, or because of mere impotence. In the same way this exchange must seek to satisfy the over-all interests of the country and not the interest of any individual, individuals, or class within it. For these special interests should not become—consciously or unconsciously—the allies of others (foreigners) against the common people. Finally, the interests of the nation must be organized in accordance with their relative importance. The lesser must be sacrificed in favor of the greater, the temporary in favor of the permanent.

36 There can be no disputing that the primary interest of the Arabs in this stage of their history is to protect their existence from the Zionist danger. Because of this fact it is incumbent on the Arabs, given their special position and the general international situation, to sacrifice other interests for this cause. However, they must also make this sacrifice with their eyes open and on the above-stated bases.

Otherwise, the bargaining will be detrimental, the profit will only run in one direction, and the Arabs will squander those interests in addition to their greater interest in Palestine.

Let no one think that this bargaining is an easy matter, for it means leading the nation along a narrow, twisted path surrounded by quagmires and pitfalls. It demands insight, prudence, and an understanding of the Western mind and the clashing interests of states. But it demands above all devotion to the interest of the nation and the sacrifice of personal goals and ambitions for the sake of the nation. These are the qualities required of the man of politics who would undertake this delicate and dangerous operation. By these qualities will his astuteness be measured, and his genuineness tested. By them will his politics be lifted above the narrow, ignoble meaning of the word and become the instrument of constructive, creative forces, "improving" everything it touches.¹ If he has these characteristics, he will merit the renown and glory that history accords to constructive politicians, or rather to true statesmen.

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These are, in my opinion, the five fundamental principles of the present struggle: perception of the danger and the will to fight, general mobilization, unification of the efforts of the Arab states, the participation of popular forces, and wide-awake international bargaining. These and others are fundamental conditions for success in our immediate endeavor to repel the Zionist danger and protect our being. Further, they are essential because of the [unexpectedly rapid] change in the Zionist scheme and because of the progress which it has achieved in its latest phase.

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1. This is in contrast to the well-known saying of Muhammad 'Abdub, "Whatever politics touches, it corrupts." — CZ

When we entered the present war, the predominant attitude was that the situation had not changed since 1939 and that the skirmishes, sporadic demonstrations, and localized attacks which we launched in our revolts against the mandatory state would be sufficient in the present war. We do not seem to have realized that at that time the aim of the struggle was to annoy the mandatory state, to weaken its prestige, and to shake the foundation of its power, thereby influencing public opinion in it and in the world at large in order to lighten the pressure of its rule and repel the Zionist danger, which depended on its protection. Since Britain was a mandatory power and its rule, at least in theory, temporary, and since its military forces were much stronger than those which the people of Palestine could muster, it was natural that their efforts to struggle and rebel should have been of that type.

Now the situation has changed. The struggle is no longer directed against a mandatory state but against a group which believes in its right to the country and which as a result of its influence and its overwhelming propaganda is supported in this belief by a large part of world public opinion. Further it is prepared to throw all its forces into the field, because for it this battle is one of life or death.

38 The Arabs are before it and the sea behind.¹ If it fails now, its dream and the strenuous efforts which it has expended throughout the years will have come to nought.

Furthermore, in recent years Zionism has taken good care to complete its preparations and to strengthen its equipment. It has changed from weak, disorganized colo-

1. This is an allusion to the famous speech attributed to Tariq ibn-Ziyad, the Muslim leader who in 711 invaded Spain and destroyed the Visigothic kingdom there. He delivered it on the eve of the decisive battle (July 19, 711) at the mouth of the Bardats river. Tariq's faltering troops were inspired to victory by the speech, which began, "O people, where is the escape? The sea is behind you, and the enemy is in front of you..." For the text consult al-Maqqari, *Nafh al-Tib* (Cairo, 1302), vol. I, pp. 112-3. — RBW

nies into a well-knit, vigorous, and unified force. Skirmishes, sporadic attacks, and partial mobilization are no longer sufficient against it. Rather, as the experience of the two world wars has driven home, the need is for total war in the modern sense.

This change in the position of Palestine and of Zionism imposes a new orientation on us in this crusade and compels us to bring about the conditions mentioned above—to make in fact a fundamental change in our attitude towards the struggle—so that our crusade may bear fruit and accomplish what it seeks, and so that we may be truly sons of the present and not of the past. He who fights the present with the past always loses!

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The reader will say, "All this may be well and good, but how important is it for the currently outstanding problem and for those other insistent questions which confront us? Shall the Arabs continue the truce which was imposed on them and which daily strengthens the side of the Zionists against them? Shall the Arabs accept partition when most of the powers of the world have united in order to execute it? What stand shall the Arab states take towards the United Nations if it resolves to partition Palestine by force?"

The answer to these and other questions posed by the present situation hinges on the military strength of the Arabs, and on their ability to deliver a crushing and rapid blow. Opinions on this subject conflict. There are those who assert that at the present time and, for various reasons, the Arab forces are incapable of carrying out this task. There are also those who, from another point of view, claim that these forces, had they had free rein and had they been well organized and co-ordinated, could have crushed the enemy in a short time and faced the world

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with a *fait accompli*. God alone knows the answer to that problem, but reliance must be placed on those leaders of the Arab states who know about such matters and upon their military experts. Therefore, no individual other than these military experts has any business judging it. In fact it is criminal to express any opinion on this most important matter, unless there are clear indications of its truth, because such an expression may have serious results on the situation in Palestine and in the Arab states themselves.

40 However, whether we are able to strike this crushing blow successfully and establish a united, democratic state in Palestine or whether we prove impotent and have partition imposed on us by the Zionists and the rest of the world, the struggle must go on. In fact, the thing which the critical observer fears most is the fading away of this spirit of struggle, for in this case, even if we succeed in establishing a united state, the Zionist danger will gradually permeate our sickly, worn body with a cancerous taint, and one day we will wake up and, lo! all of Palestine will be in the hands of the energetic, militant Zionist minority—militarily, financially, and spiritually. Similarly, if we should fail and partition should become a reality, there is no doubt that we shall fall easy prey to the expansionist Zionist power and its rapacious greed. This result will come to pass if we do not stay wide-awake, persist in our struggle, and pay careful and precise attention to the conditions which have been laid down as necessary for its success.

Actually, this rapacious, expansionist peril is now apparent, even before the end of the battle. Therefore, let us beware of following the twisted road which we followed before; let us face the danger with all the will that we have and with all the forces that we can muster; and let us fulfill the five fundamental conditions necessary for the pre-

sent struggle. Thereby will we set out on the true road to salvation!

Verily, the magnitude of the effort is measured by the seriousness of the goal!

THE FUNDAMENTAL SOLUTION

The present struggle, which we have described and whose principles and conditions we have drawn up, is necessary for the battle we are now waging. However, the war waged to uproot Zionism and to conquer it completely will not be finished in a single battle. On the contrary it will require a long and protracted war. To put it briefly—and in all frankness and sincerity—this war will not lead to the victory of the Arabs as long as they remain in their present condition. The most that they will be able to accomplish under the circumstances is to guard against the immediate Zionist evil and to protect as much of the Arab being as possible. The road to final and complete victory over this evil is different. The road to this victory lies in a fundamental change in the situation of the Arabs, and in a complete transformation of their modes of thought, action, and life.

The explanation of the victory which the Zionist have achieved—and only a person who deceives and blinds himself can deny the victory—lies not in the superiority of one people over another, but rather in the superiority of one system over another. The reason for this victory is that the roots of Zionism are grounded in modern Western life while we for the most part are still distant from this life and hostile to it. They live in the present and for the future while we continue to dream the dreams of the past and to stupefy ourselves with its fading glory.

Only a united, progressive, Arab national being will avert the Zionist danger, or for that matter any other

danger which has aggressive designs on us. The first principle, then, in the long range Arab struggle is the establishment of this being, which, as I have said above, will not be achieved unless there is a fundamental transformation in Arab life. It follows that the external struggle to repel the dangers of aggression is linked with the internal struggle to establish a sound Arab being. In fact the latter is the pivot of the former and is essential to its success.

I wonder whether it is right for us to say that there is an Arab fatherland. If we mean by fatherland simply the mountains and rivers, the plains and shores, there is no doubt that it has existed ever since the Arabs settled in their present abode. However, if—as is meet and right—we mean the permeation of the meaning of the fatherland into the Arab mentality, the birth of the will to defend and exalt it and to forward its progress, then the answer is no!

Another question: Is there an Arab nation? If we mean by nation a people who speak the Arabic language and who possess the potentialities for becoming a nation, then the answer is in the affirmative. However, if—as is meet and right—we mean by this word a nation which is united in its aims, which has actualized its potentialities, which looks forward to the future, and which opens its eyes to the light and exposes its breast to the good, whatever the source of the light and the good, then the answer is no! 43

The Zionists did not have a fatherland in the first and natural meaning of the word, but from their ancient history, their present sufferings, and their future hopes they have woven together a dream which they have resolved to realize, and which they have already gone a long way towards realizing, in a land which is not theirs. Their weapons therein are various: the penetration of this dream, and of the will to make it a reality, down to the very mar-

row of their bones; their unity in this will; their grounding in modern Western life; and their readiness for rapid advance and progress.

These Zionists do not have the characteristics of a united nation, for they are from widely separated lands, speak different languages, and follow different ways. Their only common bonds are religion and suffering. Despite these facts the idea has united them, sharpened their determination, and created in them the unflinching will to struggle so that, by this will and by their unconditional acceptance of modern civilization, they have almost accomplished that which is unnatural, whereas, that which is natural to the Arabs—that they form a nation—is not as yet accomplished. Here is the decisive difference!

44 The will to struggle and to survive can only be effectively opposed by another will of equal or greater strength. A unified loyalty can only be subdued by a more complete unity and a stronger loyalty. A system steadily pursuing modern civilization can only be conquered by a system which is more thorough in its pursuit of it and which is more completely armed with it. A progressive, dynamic mentality will never be stopped by a primitive, static mentality. To summarize, we repeat that only a united Arab being possessing these characteristics will repel the Zionist danger—or for that matter any danger from abroad—and that the Arabs will attain a being of this type only through a fundamental transformation in their way of life. The minds of the intellectuals and of those in the Arab countries who earnestly work for an effective and fundamental solution of the Zionist problem—or better of the whole Arab problem—must be so directed as to understand the reality of this being and to seek ways of bringing it about.

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What then are the characteristics of this Arab being which must be brought into existence?

The first of these characteristics is union. That is, the Arabs should organize themselves into a unified state in which their foreign and economic policies and their defense forces are united. Five, or six, or seven states, each completely independent of the other (not counting the weak tie which the League represents), each concerned with its own affairs and internal interests, each subjected to various foreign influences and to internal forces with conflicting interests—states in this condition cannot repel the harrowing blows of our time. If, then, the union which we seek is [under normal circumstances] a national goal necessitated by linguistic and historical ties among the Arabs as well as by mutual self-interest, the Zionist danger has transformed it into a condition of existence and a necessity for life itself. For this danger, with other foreign dangers added to it, will assuredly worm its way through these nations and hammer wedges between them. It will strengthen the disagreements, increase various and contradictory local self-interests, and widen the split in the Arab structure. As long as sticks are separate or [only] tied together with a thin strand, it is easy to break them one after another. The only thing that will save them from damage is to strengthen the bands so that they will not break, but will face every blow with strength and unity and repel it with decisive loss. 45

However, by itself this union is not enough. In fact it cannot even be achieved if another fundamental condition is not met by the Arabs. This condition is economic, social, and intellectual development. For that reason we have also described the united Arab national being which we seek as progressive.*

* Some nationalists fear the use of words such as "progressive," "revolutionary," [*inqilabiyah*; the word *inqilab* is also frequently translated as *transformation*. — RBW] etc., because the Communists reiterate them often as though only the Communists can

It has now become necessary for us to know, since nationalism has become a catchword bandied about on every tongue, that the formation of nationalism did not occur in the West, and will never occur anywhere, until specific economic, social, and intellectual conditions had been met. It was formed only when there was a breaking down of feudalism (not to mention tribalism), sectarianism, fatalism, and occultism. It prevailed only when the machine appeared and a primitive, static, disunited system of economics and of living was transformed into a dynamic, specialized, interdependent system, when the powerful barriers between different classes of people were lowered, and when organized, logical knowledge spread and controlled the yearnings of the imagination and the course of thought, thus changing a simple, naive mentality into one that is wide-awake, open-minded, and complex.

Those who act today to create Arab nationalism and Arab union on the basis of the present social structure are attempting it to no avail because their efforts do not run parallel to the course of history and the laws of society. These efforts will never bear fruit unless the struggle for union is bound up with the struggle for an internal revolution and is built on its foundation. For nationalism and national union both arose during a definite period, the modern period, and neither they nor that development of thought and action which parallels them are in any way compatible with the institutions or the mentality of ancient times or of the Middle Ages.

This development, or rather in our case this revolu-

use them. However, I do not here imply class war or anything else reflecting Communist theory. The time has come for our groups which are alert for liberation to know that progress toward the realization of liberty and revolt against reaction and exploitation are not the monopoly of Communism. In the same way our nationalists must know that the greatest danger for our nationalism is reaction in all its manifestations, and that ■ they really want to fight Communism their only course is to have their nationalism flow with the forces of the times, struggle against the chains of the past, revolt against exploitation, and grope for the roads to progress wherever they may be.

tion, is therefore a necessary condition for building our awaited being. The three attributes which we have ascribed to this being are "nationalism," "union," and "progressiveness." Each is tied to the others by strong bonds. Neither of them can stand without the others. Further, this progressiveness, which is necessary for national reconstruction, is at the same time an absolutely essential weapon for combatting the Zionist danger and other aggressive dangers like it. By this weapon, as we have noticed above, the Zionists defeated us in this stage of our struggle, and they will continue to defeat us as long as we turn our backs on it.

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What then are the elements of this progressiveness and what are the goals of the revolution which we seek? This is no place to deal with the subject in detail or to compare the actual situation with the ideal, but briefly we may say that the aims of this revolution finally merge into a single clear goal. It is that we become in fact and in spirit, as well as in name and in body, a part of the world in which we live, that we harmonize with it in life and thought, that we speak its language, that we tie ourselves to its roots, and that we ally our fortunes to its fortunes. In order to attain this goal we must take numerous steps which will turn our life from the modes of ancient and medieval times to the mode of modern times.

In my opinion the most important of these steps are the following. I shall [merely] enumerate them, leaving an exhaustive study of them, and the details thereof, to another occasion.

First, the machine must be acquired and used on the widest possible scale in exploiting our resources, for the machine is in the forefront of those factors which brought about in the West the revolution that led to the modern

48 way of life. The introduction of it into our present life, along with the concomitant result of industrializing this life, would to a large extent guarantee the destruction of tribalism, feudalism, and other characteristics that stand in the way of nationalism.

Second, the state must be absolutely separated from the religious organization, for nationalism is inconsistent with literal theocracy. The states of the West have only realized national strength to the extent that they have uprooted sectarianism and organized their life on the basis of the latest achievements of open-minded, cumulative thought.

Third, the mind must be systematized and organized by training in the positive and empirical sciences, and the nation's cultural efforts must be directed toward the realization of the greatest possible degree of scientific organization, keeping as far away as possible from benumbing fancy and insubstantial romanticism, the lost guides that lead even further astray. There is nothing like an organized mind for uprooting falsehood and erecting the life of the nation on secure foundations.

Fourth, generally speaking, the breast must be opened wide to the acquisition of the highest mental and spiritual values which human civilizations have achieved—values whose validity for building a civilization has been confirmed both intellectually and practically by the experience of human striving. For the establishment of states depends not only on the acquisition and efficient use of material and mental technique, but also on steadfastness of moral character, depth of belief, patience in adversity, and earnest pursuit of the good. None of these will be achieved unless the nation roots itself firmly in the fundamental values which human striving has discovered throughout the ages.

These, in my opinion, are the fundamental character-

istics of progressiveness which we seek and of the revolution which we so much desire in our present life. Some may look askance at this opinion and think that in urging the acquisition of both the material and spiritual aspects of modern civilization there is some departure from our history and loss of our national traditions. The fact is that some of our traditions are unsound, and these will be demolished and routed by the forces of modern civilization whether we desire it or not. Moreover, that which is lasting and sound, and suitable to this (or any) time, can only be discovered, separated from the temporary and the worthless, and vitally and completely assimilated into our present lives, by the action of that liberated, organized mind which we must acquire from modern civilization and on the foundation of which we must build our revolution. 49

In any case let the sceptics relax! For this progressiveness can lead us to no more evil situation than that in which we are. In the face of the shock sustained under the Zionist blows, our existing position ended in a terrible material and moral bankruptcy. In this struggle our traditions were of absolutely no avail. As a matter of fact we found that in spite of what our enemy had acquired and amassed from modern civilization—or rather thanks to these acquisitions—he surpassed us in intensity of belief, in unity of loyalty, and in ability to hold on to people, land, and country just as he surpassed us in weapons of war and in material techniques. We have, therefore, nothing to fear from this national progressiveness. What we do have to fear above all is shrinking from it, disdaining it, and suffocating ourselves in inflexible, inherited shells.

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There remains one more question: where is the road to this all-inclusive revolution which, on the broadest scale and to the greatest extent, will assure national progress? 50

There are some obvious roads which will lead to this revolution and which will aid it. They include: the encouragement of local initiative in the exploitation of the area's resources, the propagation of knowledge and culture by all [available] means, broadening the extent of political, social, and intellectual liberties, and the reform of administrative procedures, as well as other courses of action leading toward development and progress.

However, these courses of action, despite their far-reaching influence on the revolution to which we look forward, are limited from two points of view. The first is that they are slow to take effect and need extended effort over a long period of time in order to bring about the fundamental change which is desired in our present situation. But we are in a situation where we cannot allow time and effort the liberty to do their work slowly and calmly. The external and internal dangers which threaten our existence do not permit us to wait for gradual evolution; instead, they impose on us, if we want to be secure and to survive, a plunge forward—a [real] revolution. Secondly, the aforementioned courses of action need people who will discover, strengthen, and universalize them; they need sincere, able workers and creative leaders. These courses of action will for their part help to bring forth such leaders. They in turn, when found, will control and direct these policies with a view to multiplying their results and strengthening their effect in bringing about the fundamental change which is sought.

51 The factors making for progress, like all the forces of life, are interrelated and interdependent. A cause produces a result, and this result in its turn may become a cause and thus strengthen and support the first cause. It is not reasonable to want to eliminate those evolutionary factors which we have mentioned, such as propagating

knowledge and so forth, but there is no doubt that the point of departure for that change and revolution at which we must today aim is no other than those who lead and shape, the creative elite which can grasp these means and push them hard along that single road which we seek.

This elite, on whose shoulders this most serious task will be laid, or which rather will seize it by force, must have already realized within itself the progress and the revolution which it seeks within society. For he who is motivated by impulse rather than by faith cannot inculcate faith in the nation no matter how loud his voice or how flowery his speech. He who has not liberated himself but remains a slave to impulses and ambitions cannot liberate any one else no matter how exalted his position or how great his authority. He whose mind is obscured and in the corner of whose brain the spider of fanaticism and reaction nests will never bring light to his nation nor will he propagate tolerance, co-operation, and unity in his society no matter what the color of the garment he wears.

Therefore, the initial condition for the success of revolutionary and progressive action is that its leaders and masters be progressive in their souls and revolutionary down to the marrow of their bones. Each of those who apply themselves to this most serious task must measure himself by this scale and evaluate himself on this basis. The people in general—and the cultured and liberated in particular—must test their leaders by this touchstone. Those whose metal is pure will be worthy of leadership, whereas those whose metal shows debasement will be condemned and rejected. 52

This elite must, as a prerequisite of its existence, organize and unify itself into well-knit parties and organizations. These must stand on a unified and pure doctrine and must be bound by a strong, sound loyalty to which the

elite will subjugate all its divergent tendencies and in which it will willingly and freely believe. One view of the history of the various awakenings in the world demonstrates most clearly that a bringing together of the forces of these struggling elites within party organizations and the like is the greatest factor in creating the awakening and transforming the situation.

53 As another prerequisite of its own existence this elite must create true leadership and produce those individuals who build states, create nations, and make history. These are the ones who sow their seeds deep in the very life of the people and whose sights are at the same time set on what ought to be. They continue to work, with the support of those who believe as they do and who associate themselves with them, until they or their successors complete the fashioning of a new life and the rebuilding of a shattered being. These are those who live every minute of their lives under pressure from their consciences and in fear of the judgment of history. These are the Sufis—Sufis not because they are ascetic and abstinent, but because they step forward and accept [the challenge]—who are not striving for personal satisfaction and happiness, but who will receive both through the immersion of the self in the larger entity of the fatherland. In a word these, and other reformers like them, are they without whom a nation does not exist, a civilization does not flourish, and human life has no flavor or meaning.

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An Arab national life, united and progressive, which as we have said contains within itself the fundamental solution of the Palestine problem and in fact of the Arab problem in its entirety, will remain a dream and a potentiality if it is not first realized in the souls of the nation's struggling elite—led by true leaders drawn from it—and in the

system which this elite sets up, and in the parties and institutions which it establishes.

As one looks around himself, he finds that this point of departure is still slight and that the struggling elite which we seek is still small and scattered. It has not become strong as a result of enlightened vision and fire-tested struggle. The hostile forces of imperialism, and the ruling classes and their temptations have collaborated to weaken and scatter it. Some individuals within it have left an impression, but as an organized group it has had no clear or palpable effect.

The young men of this nation look around in all directions, but on the one hand they do not find their ideal within the present leadership, nor on the other hand do the struggles of the disjointed nationalist cliques satisfy their eager ambition; thus despair overcomes them, and perplexity overflows in their souls. They end either by doubting their own nation and despairing of the potentialities of their people, in which case they follow a path leading toward satisfaction of desire and yielding to temptation, or else they fall prey to some destructive movement and find their consolation in uproar and disturbance for its own sake, regardless of result. No one can escape these dangers and preserve his faith and belief except the few who have strong spirits and sound sinews. But even these are in danger of dispersal and disintegration after the tragedy of Palestine!

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However, whatever the case may be and no matter how weak and disunited our struggling elites may be at this time, there is absolutely no doubt that they *are* the point of departure, the beginning of the road, and the source of hope.

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This is the beginning of the road. Along this road the spirit of resistance and of struggle in these struggling elite groups must be sharpened, and their interaction with the people and their perception of the people's needs must be continued. In addition, these elites must study thoroughly the awakenings of other nations and thus acquire their experience. They must harmonize themselves more thoroughly and strengthen their organization. They must fuse themselves by the single loyalty and dedicate themselves anew to the prescribed goal—all this until, through strength and unity, they bring about the hoped-for being within themselves and thereby become worthy of bringing it about in their society.

55 The fundamental transformation of our present situation, within which transformation lies the solution to the Palestine problem and to the whole Arab problem, will be determined by the extent to which our struggling elites hew out this path for themselves and by the type of leadership which is produced by them in this struggle. Perhaps these elite groups will find that the first thing which this revolution will demand is a revolution within themselves, in their mentality and in their modes of thought and action. A revolution which has not first begun in the soul cannot influence others or have any effect on society. Therefore, let our struggling elite group look at themselves through these glasses and judge themselves on this basis, for the situation is critical, the result will be decisive, and the forces of life are merciless.

In the long run nothing worse than we deserve will befall us, nor will we attain more than we deserve!

THE MEANING OF THE DISASTER

An observer of the history of nations and of the evolution of civilizations will note that their growth and progress are dependent on the difficulties and hardships which surround them. It is not true, as some say, that civilizations have first appeared in countries which had fertile land, ample resources, and a good climate. Ease and comfort have never constituted the way to improvement and progress. Civilizations have only arisen and developed when difficulties and problems confronted them in either their natural or human environments and thus forced them to intellectual effort and to self-sacrifice for the purpose of conquering these difficulties. Consequently, sacrifice and effort were the cause of their progress and their salvation.

Nations are in this respect like individuals. All of us 57 know that a youth whose parents overly facilitate his education and his work does not derive as much benefit or achieve as much as does a poor, needy youth. Thus we see that the generations of most families are as follows: a generation which through energy and toil amasses wealth, then one which enjoys it to the full, and finally one which squanders and wastes it.

Therefore, difficulties and hardships—even disasters—are an incentive to individuals and groups and are one of the causes of their awakening and their renaissance. But they do not have this effect in all situations, for in some cases they will cause destruction and collapse, even extinction.

A blow which will arouse a young man and which will lead to a strong reaction on his part may destroy a crumbling old man. A problem which will awaken an open mind and increase its vitality and efficiency may paralyze a loose, disjointed mind.

It is thus with nations, for one nation may conquer the obstacles and obstructions of its natural environment whereas another may be completely defeated by similar obstacles. In fact the same nation may in one stage of its evolution be more capable of overcoming an obstacle than in another stage. In some cases it may be able to meet attacks and disasters and rise up more powerful and more vital, while in other circumstances it may be defeated or annihilated. History is full of examples of all these phenomena.

58 Some believe that it was the attacks of the barbarians which destroyed the Roman Empire. The fact is that the Roman Empire had previously sustained more important and more awesome blows and had endured and overcome them, and, in fact, as a result of contending with them, had acquired new strength and a more effective will. But, by the time the barbarians came, it had disintegrated internally and was unable to stand before their attacks. In reality the disintegration itself was what invited the barbarians to the Empire and made them covetous of it.

Some of us still believe that the attacks of the Turks and the Mongols are what destroyed the Abbasid Caliphate and Arab power in general. But here also the fact is that the Arabs had been defeated internally before the Mongols defeated them and that, had those attacks been launched against them when they were in the period of growth and enlightenment, the Mongols would not have overcome them. On the contrary the attacks might have revitalized and re-energized them.

It is thus with other nations.

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The disaster which afflicts us today is, therefore, the touchstone of our present internal situation. If the factors making for reaction and disintegration control us, this disaster will increase our weakness, disintegration, and fragmentation. However, if the factors making for progress and growth have some strength (even if they are not in full control), then the hard blow which we have had ought to strengthen these factors and to impel them forward with greater energy and with cumulative effect.

We speak a great deal about our present Arab awakening and we are proud of it. Today, however, this awakening is being tested in the fire of experience. Either it will emerge pure and unalloyed, or else weakness, corruption, and the predominance of veneer over inner core and of noise over real action will appear. 59

Since these struggling, progressive forces are the ones which will in the last analysis bear the burden of the awakening, the present disaster—and every other blow which we have sustained in the past or will sustain in the future—is in reality a trial for them, and a test of their strength, solidarity, ability to act, and aptitude for leadership. Nor will this test have any value or effect if one is not aware of it, that is if he himself is not at the same time both the tester and the tested.

Every Arab who considers himself in this category must examine himself and analyze his value. Both the men of thought and those who struggle in the various spheres of action, and indeed all who are enthusiastic to serve their country, must both individually and collectively examine themselves in order to determine whether this disaster has weakened and scattered them or whether it has increased their will, their determination, and their unity.

Let them prove their character and their potentiality for standing firm in the face of pressure and temptation!

Let them test their beliefs and their loyalty against trials and calamities!

Let them examine their progressiveness and liberalism in order to find out how sharp and strong they are when
60 confronted by the pressure and attacks of reaction!

Let them measure the extent to which their eyes are open to the light and their breasts are open to liberation in all senses of the word!

Let them take stock of themselves and rise in revolt against their own points of weakness and dispersion; then let them preserve the elements of strength, and then strengthen them even more!

If they do these things, they will emerge from the disaster more resolute and more united, and their nation will have hope in life and a provision for the future.

Then our substance will be purified in the fire of tribulation and our being will be crystallized.

Then, and then only, will the disaster have a positive, constructive meaning.

Then, and then only, will ease emerge from hardship, resolution and purity from disturbance, and the seeds of victory from disaster.

A SUPPLEMENT ON THE PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING OUR STRUGGLE IN PALESTINE

The reader will find in what follows, two chapters written on two different occasions before the disaster took place. In them I attempted to clarify the principles on which our struggle in Palestine is based. Now that what has happened has happened, it occurs to me that the reader may feel that they are somewhat devoid of meaning and may himself ask whether it is valid for us to discuss principles since the march of events in Palestine has confirmed the fact that force has the last word and that self-interest holds complete sway over the policies of nations and over their relations with each other. 62

Doubtless, he will say, "I have faith in the lofty principles on which our case rests but what good have they done? Of what value to the Arabs was the validity and justice of these principles? What effect did they have on the decisions which the highest international organizations made, or on the policies which both great and small nations follow in this case? Is the conscience of nations or of the world at large moved by truth or principle when material interest raises its head or influence makes itself felt or force bares its teeth? Let us then turn away from fine words and pretty thoughts and put all we have into material preparations and into the mobilization of our strength and resources in order to proceed with the struggle."

I am not unfamiliar with this appeal for arousing and concentrating our strength. On the contrary, if there is, in the heart of this book, a moral to the analysis of the causes

of our disaster and of the means of remedying them, it lies exactly here. It lies in stirring up the spirit of struggle, mobilizing our resources, and broadening the base of our war effort. It lies in uprooting weakness and the causes of disunity and in excising the cancer of corruption and reaction from the body of the nation so that this body may become safe and strong, may be fit for survival and growth, and may conquer itself and thus be able to stand up to others. It lies in an all-inclusive national revival and in continuous, progressive self-renewal.

63 However, this appeal for strength and revival is not inconsistent with seeking and following principles. In fact the struggle will gain in strength if it is based on belief, if it issues out of faith, and if it is tied to high principles and fundamental values. History teaches us this fact and the experience of peoples confirms it. Naked force has often dominated in the life of nations—but only for a time. The revolutions which have sought merely to seize power have only led to disturbance and destruction. The true revolutions—the revolutions which build and renew—have relied on principles; they have been impelled by the fine ideals and lofty examples which dominated the minds of the leaders and which moved the souls of the people.

Therefore, the fact that our crusade in Palestine emanates from sound principles will not harm it. Nor will the national transformation which we seek be harmed if sound belief calls it forth and if upright ideals and lofty, creative examples chart its course. The most harmful thing of all would be for us to believe that these ideals or examples can protect our existence and insure our progress if we do not at the same time tie our camel,¹ buckle down to the

¹ The allusion is to a *hadith* (tradition) of the Prophet: A man who had frequently been told that he must trust in God entered a mosque to pray without first tying his camel. When he finished praying, he went out and found that this camel was gone, whereupon he went to the Prophet and complained. The Prophet said, "Tie your camel and [then] trust in God" (*P'il wa-'itakil*). — RBW

task, and assemble for the morrow as much strength as we are capable of.

This strength which we seek implies not only money, weapons, and material means, but also depth of faith, strength of loyalty, readiness to sacrifice, and steadfastness in the face of discouragement and temptation. It involves strength of character, steady nerves, and spiritual well-being; and derives from common purpose, co-ordinated action, and an outpouring of effort—all directed towards achieving the goal.

This moral and spiritual strength which is necessary in the struggle does not come to either an individual or to a people if they have not clarified the principles on which the struggle is centered, the aims which they are trying to realize, and the value of these aims and principles in the scale of historical experience and human progress.

64

Some indication of the corruption and perversion of values in this age—a corruption which has become disgracefully apparent during the course of the Palestine problem—may be seen in the fact that a man whose function is the service of thought and the instilling of principles in the hearts of the young must resort to placing his study of principles in an appendix rather than in an introduction and must justify to himself and to his readers the fact that he undertakes the discussion at all. But at least let it be recorded that we have not forgotten these principles, and for our part let us continue to act in a way which will confirm our deep adherence to them and which will strengthen our spirits through the will and faith that they inspire. Let us preserve them and rely and draw on them as we gather strength for the present struggle and for the national transformation which we await.

These considerations persuaded me to include the two following chapters in this little study. I hope that the think-

ing in them is in harmony with that of the whole and that together they may contribute toward the fulfillment of some of my hopes for that sound intellectual preparation and fruitful action which will solve both our immediate and our long-range problems.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN PRINCIPLE AND FORCE IN THE PALESTINE PROBLEM*

When the newspaper, *al-'Amal*, first requested me to write an article on the Palestine problem, I hesitated for two reasons: first, because the large amount of material written on the subject from various points of view, plus the daily expressions of opinion by politicians, writers, and news commentators in the press, magazines, and radio, seemed to obviate further treatment; second, because this problem had reached a point where the need was not for talking, argument, and discussion, but rather for quick and decisive action. However, I reconsidered and have accepted the request in the hope that what I will say may be of some value in illuminating the problem and in uncovering its roots.

Since there are many aspects of this problem and since its details have many ramifications, and since both these broad aspects and the details had been subjected, as I have said, to broad study and widespread commentary, I saw that the best possible procedure was to break through to the essence and to relate the branches to the roots, for problems cannot be truly understood unless they are related to their roots and principles. One of the results of the intense Zionist propaganda campaign has been to weave around the core of the Palestine problem a web of misleading views which have diverted world public opinion from the reality of that core, with the result that it has

* Published in the special Christmas (1947) number of the Beirut newspaper *al-'Amal*.

become difficult to get back to it and to face the reality of it. Therefore, let us strip this problem of its external appearances and penetrate to the inner essence. What do we find?

We find that we have a problem in which principle on the one hand is confronted by force and interest on the other. Thus, the effect of this problem is not limited to Arabs and Zionists. In fact it involves the whole world, for it is a touchstone of the conscience of the world and of the strength of international organization. Furthermore, it is an indication of the direction in which human society will move: towards justice and peace, or toward oppression and continuous war.

67 In this question the principle is the right of every people to the land on which they live and on which their forefathers have lived for long centuries—to the land which has been dyed red with their blood, and with whose soil the sweat of their brow has been mixed. It is the right to exploit the land's resources and to establish therein any political, social, or cultural system which they choose, provided that they do not infringe on the liberty and rights of other peoples.

Mankind has struggled for centuries to have this right acknowledged and in its name has spilled blood and made other sacrifices. In World War I when the leaders of the Allied nations proclaimed it, the world imagined that it would be the basis of international organization after the war, but it was not long before this vision cracked on the rock of self-interest, and once more force and balance of power began to steer the world. The recent war was similar: the proclamation of lofty principles in the Atlantic Charter and elsewhere and a new international organization, the United Nations, but, unfortunately, force, interest, and balance of power are still the effective factors in inter-

national politics.

If we review all the decisions and measures which have been taken in connection with Palestine, we find that they are contrary to the natural right of the Arabs and to the fundamental principle of the right of self-determination for which the nations proclaimed they were fighting and in the name of which they sacrificed themselves to an extraordinary degree.

The Balfour Declaration which Britain gave to the Jews and which the Zionists take as the foundation stone of their legal claims, was completely contrary to the 68
aforementioned principle. The British had no right from any point of view to dispose of a land which was not their own or to determine the future of any people other than their own. I do not here refer to the contradiction between the Balfour Declaration and the pledges which the British made to the Arabs, despite its importance, for I am limiting my inquiry to the principle involved, regardless of political or other points of view, which also favor the Arabs.

Some may say that the British acquired the right to dispose of Palestine because they conquered it and obtained it as spoils of war from the Ottoman Turks. One refutation of this argument is that the British did not conquer it alone but in partnership with the Arabs, who allied themselves with them and who rose up in their well-known revolt in order to liberate their country. However, the more important refutation from the point of view of principle is that the right of conquest can no longer be considered a basis for world organization. If it can be, we have turned civilization back to the Dark Ages and have trampled under foot the fundamental principle of nationalism, namely, the right of every people to its land and to the determination of its own destiny.

Others may say that the Balfour Declaration acquired

an international legal character when the League of Nations endorsed it and made it one of the bases of the British mandate for Palestine. The answer to this claim is that what is built on a false foundation will continue to be false even if the whole world endorses it. Furthermore, the mandate over Palestine is itself contrary to the general principle of mandates enunciated in Article twenty-two of the Covenant of the League of Nations, for in paragraph 69 four of this Article there appears the following:

Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.

In the light of this statement, the inclusion of the Balfour Declaration in the text of the mandate for Palestine was not only a transgression of the natural rights of the Arabs, but also contrary to the fundamental principle relevant to all mandates for territories which had been under Ottoman control and whose independence was provisionally recognized. For beyond any doubt the policy of immigration and of acting to build a national Jewish home impaired this previously recognized independence, not to mention the fact that the wishes of the people of Palestine were never considered either as to the mandate itself or as to the choice of the mandatory power.

Palestine was thus ruled for a period of twenty-five years by a regime based neither on natural nor legal principles, but instead on force and self-interest. Through this force the sovereignty of the Arabs was violated instead of being preserved, and their existence in their own land was

encompassed by danger and threatened with extinction.

Now the United Nations has committed the same crime and sacrificed principle on the altar of interest. Its decision on partition transgresses the right of the people of Palestine to determine their future in accordance with well-established democratic processes and is also contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter itself. Even if we assume that the mandate for Palestine was based on a legal foundation—and we have demonstrated that it was not—we find no article in the twelfth chapter of the Charter (which deals with mandated territories) that gives the United Nations the right to partition the country or to dispose of it as it wants. There is one single inescapable principle: to aid this country to attain its independence and to determine its own fate. 70

Thus the decision of the United Nations—like the mandate—rests on neither a moral nor a legal foundation. The Arab delegations came forward with the proposal of submitting this question to the International Court of Justice so that it might give its opinion on the competence of the United Nations to decide on partition. Even this proposal was turned down—a fact showing that the United Nations, under the pressure of various forces and interests, was not in this case prepared to listen to the voice of the highest legal authority in the world.

We deduce from all that has preceded that the struggle against Zionism and against the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine is not, from the Arab point of view, merely a national struggle, but a struggle for the sake of a lofty human ideal—a struggle between right and might, between principle and interest.

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Some may ask: “do the Zionists not have principles on

71 which they build their movement and in which they clothe their propaganda and through which they acquire sympathy and support?"

They do indeed flaunt many "principles," but none of them will stand before fact and evidence.

The Zionists claim that Palestine is the national home of the Jews because they inhabited it for many generations in the past, that they were then driven from it, and that they now have the right to return to it. The fact is that the Jews infiltrated Palestine in ancient time as other Semitic tribes infiltrated the countries of the Fertile Crescent, but they established a unified kingdom in it only during the period of David and Solomon (1017-937 B.C.), and this kingdom lasted only for a limited period. Even during that short period their rule did not include all of Palestine, for the Philistines and others continued to have power and influence in the country. Then the Jewish kingdom was divided into two states—north and south. The first fell in 722 B.C., and the second in 586 B.C. During the following centuries they were scattered, and although they tried to rebuild their political life, they failed time after time until finally, during the first two Christian centuries, they were completely dispersed. One thing which shows that their relationship with Palestine was transitory is that the name by which the country has been known throughout history is not derived from them but from their bitterest enemies, the Philistines. Further it is important to note that even at the peak of their power they did not inhabit the regions which they now occupy and which were
72 given them by the partition—that is, the plains and the coast. These were the home of the Philistines and the center of their power.

In addition, the Zionist Jews who are now immigrating to Palestine bear absolutely no relation to the Semitic

Jews. In fact they are from another stock which is completely different from the Semitic stock. Historians affirm that the great majority of the eastern European Jews—and they are the ones who are now pouring into Palestine—trace their origins back to the Khazar tribes who embraced Judaism in the eighth Christian century and who later spread throughout eastern and central Europe. Thus their only bond with the Jews who settled in Palestine in ancient times is religion, which is not a valid basis on which to build nationalism or to found a state.

On the other hand, the Arabs in Palestine represent not only the tribes which migrated from the [Arabian] Peninsula in the seventh century—those tribes were in fact small in number—but all the inhabitants, Semites and others (Philistines, Canaanites, Amorites, Aramaeans, etc.) who have come to Palestine one after another since the dawn of history and who were Arabicized in the seventh century and thereafter. Thus they are the original inhabitants of the country, and the sojourn of the Jews in their country was only transitory and temporary when compared with the long history of the country.

Even if we grant the Jews an historical right in the past, what right does that confer on them in the present? If historical relationship is a valid basis for claiming title to a country, the Arabs would today have the right to claim Spain, the Italians would have the right to claim England, and all the population of the United States would have to leave it and return it to the American Indians.

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From whatever point of view we examine the historical principle to which the Zionists appeal, we find that their case has no foundation and cannot be proved.

The Zionist Jews claim that Palestine is their land, that God promised it to them, and that the prophets prophesied their certain return to it. Some Christians have

been taken in by these claims in view of certain prophecies which appear in some books of the Bible. But these Christians forget that the Jews refused the Christian message in its entirety and that they, by surrendering to this Jewish claim, surrender the cradle of their religion to a group which has refused it and has fought it throughout the centuries. Further, how can we accept the view that any one people is the special people of God, that there is a covenant between God and them, or that God has singled them out for a particular relationship or distinction. The idea of a "chosen people" is closer to that of Nazism than to any other idea, and [in the end] it will fall and collapse just as Nazism did.

74 Let us note that the Zionist state which is now being built in Palestine is as far as possible from religion, for it is a secular state in every sense of the world. It uses the principle of religion, among other things, merely as a vehicle for propaganda, for in fact the state centers on such basic concepts of the secular state as land, industry, and culture. In fact its fundamental bases are conquest and seizure by force—and how remote are they from true religion!

The Zionists attempt to support their case for the establishment of a state in Palestine on the persecution and agonies which the Jews have suffered throughout the ages, especially under Nazi rule and during the recent war. They point to the tens of thousands who still live in refugee camps in Germany and elsewhere.

If we assume for the sake of argument that the Jews had no hand in bringing about the persecution which has befallen them, that they in no way contributed to it, and that it was all the fault of other peoples, who then is responsible for it and at whose expense should it be rectified? Is it proper that the Arabs be asked to pay the price of the persecution and suffering which the peoples of Europe

have inflicted on the Jews? Is it just to ask the Arabs to give up their land and their sovereignty in order to atone for the crimes and tyranny of the Western peoples? Is it right that this heavy burden should be imposed on the Arabs and that they should pay this penalty despite the fact that throughout the ages they have been tolerant toward the Jews, and have granted them freedom and allowed them to flourish to a greater degree than has any other people in the past?

The problem of the persecution of Jews is a world-wide problem and will only be solved by the spread of a spirit of religious and social tolerance throughout the whole world; but responsibility for the refugees and displaced persons falls on the shoulders of those peoples who persecuted them. And since Nazism has disappeared from Europe, what prevents their return to their homelands and the facilitation of their means of livelihood therein? 75 The truth is that had the Zionists of America spent, on ways of assisting and settling them, a part of what they are spending on Zionist propaganda and weapons, the question of Jewish refugees and displaced persons would have been settled.

Finally, the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine will not in fact lessen the persecution of Jews in the West nor solve their problem. Indeed, the problem may become more complicated. Fanaticism and persecution may increase and may lead the peoples of the West, whenever some misfortune overtakes them and they feel that the Jews have had a hand in it, to blame the Jews and call upon them to get out of the country and emigrate to Palestine. Intelligent Jews throughout the world await this reaction with great concern, but they cannot stand up and say so in the face of the tightly-knit, militant Zionist minority.

The Zionists say that they did not take the land of

Palestine by force, but purchased it with their own money and that for this reason they have the right to establish a state on it. Some are taken in by this claim, forgetting that for the last twenty-five years Palestine has been under a type of rule which facilitated this sale of land instead of limiting or preventing it. Hence [one realizes] the value of independence and the rise of a government which will safeguard the sovereignty of the people and protect their heritage. If foreign groups were to descend on Lebanon or any other independent country, and by exorbitant prices began enticing its people, began buying their property, obtaining concessions, and forming companies in order to exploit the resources of the country, and began introducing legislation which would reserve those properties and resources to them exclusively and which would prevent their return to their rightful owners in any way, shape, or form—would the government stand with both hands tied behind its back? Would it not take the measures necessary to defend the people's heritage and the national resources? The mandatory power did not undertake this defense; on the contrary the economic situation which it established in Palestine and the exorbitant taxes which it imposed in order to prop up an artificial system, instead of preserving and protecting the national heritage, encouraged the resulting losses of it. This does not mean that the Arabs had absolutely no responsibility for what happened in this connection, but it does mean that the responsibility falls in the first place on those who deprived the Arabs of their independence, who placed their destiny in the hands of a government foreign to them, and who brought about in their country a situation openly aimed at destroying their being and erecting another being on its debris. In addition, the mere purchase and possession of land in a geographically unified country is not a justifiable basis for destroying this geographical unity and erecting a foreign state in it. In fact, this unity should be

preserved, and on the basis of it the political structure should be established by recognized democratic means.

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These are some of the "principles" on which Zionists base their propaganda. These "principles," and others like them which we cannot treat in this article, do not, as we have seen, rest on a valid or strong foundation. All of them collapse and fall apart before one clear truth which cannot be refuted, namely, the right of the Arabs to determine their own future and to preserve the natural legacy which they inherited from their forefathers.

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What then forbids them this right?

Power and self-interest.

The power is the world-wide power of the Jews—politically, financially, and culturally.

This power became clear during the first World War. It extracted the Balfour Declaration from the British government, then imposed on the members of the League of Nations the inclusion of this declaration in the text of the mandate, and continued under the mandate to act in England and America so as to secure continued support for its aggressive policy, despite the awakening of British politicians to its dangers and despite successive Arab revolts. In recent years this power has been centered in the United States. No one who has not stayed in that country and studied its conditions can truly estimate the extent of this power or visualize the awful danger of it. Many American industries and financial institutions are in the hands of Jews, not to mention the press, radio, cinema, and other media of propaganda, or Jewish voters in the states of New York, Illinois, Ohio, and others which are important in presidential elections, especially in these days when the conflict between Democrats and Republicans is at a peak

and both parties are trying to acquire votes from any quarter possible.

78 To estimate the danger of Jewish power in the United States, and consequently in all the world, it suffices to know that the Jews of the United States collected one hundred and five million dollars in 1946 and one hundred and seventy million this year, and that they are now making provisions to collect three hundred and fifty million—all for the support of the new Jewish state.

This is the power: the power of the Jews. Let us turn to the self-interest. There are, in the first place, the domestic interests of American parties, which, as well-informed Americans know, are contrary to the higher interests of America as a state with important stakes in the Arab world. Then there is Russia's interest in finding for itself an opening in the Near East behind the strong points with which the Anglo-Saxon states are building in her face in Greece, Turkey, and Iran. Thus if the situation in Palestine is disturbed and the Security Council intervenes either as a body or by means of some of its members, the Soviets will have an opportunity to penetrate into this vital region of the world behind the Anglo-Saxons' first line of defense.

These two interests, the American internal and the Soviet external, coincided with other imperialistic interests and with the world-wide power of the Jews and led to the partition decision and to the sacrifice of right and principle.

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79 Thus I return at the end of this article to what I stated in the beginning, namely that the essence of the Palestine problem is a struggle between right and principle on the one hand and between power and interest on the other.

This struggle will be long and hard, and the greatest effort and most far-reaching sacrifice will be demanded of the Arabs. If they do not meet the demands and make the sacrifice whatever the cost, they will expose themselves to an awesome danger which will threaten them wherever they may be.

If a Jewish state is actually established in Palestine and is internationally secured through recognition by the United Nations and by individual states, it will not be long until it has the largest air force in the Near East and, God forbid, a merchant marine and a fleet which will dominate these shores in their entirety as well as an organized, mechanized army supported by abundant matériel and the most hellish modern weapons. This state will open its doors to thousands of immigrants who will pour into it from Europe and to millions of dollars which will flood it from America. Thus it will become a human and financial force which will be difficult to contain in its own area and which will overflow into the remainder of the Arab countries by every possible means and thus constitute, during a situation of world disturbance, a great danger for those countries. This danger is aggravated by the fact that it occupies the coast and the sea passages and is established in a vital area between the Arab countries. For Palestine is the bridge between these countries, and if a foreign power conquers it, relations between them will be disrupted, and the chain of co-operation and unity will be broken.

The struggle of the Arabs will be prolonged and hard. It should strengthen them in this struggle to know that they are repelling one of the most awesome and serious dangers that they have confronted throughout their history, a danger which threatens the essence of their being in their various countries, a danger which, wherever they are, exposes their natural right and acquired independence to col-

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lapse and extinction. It should also strengthen them to know that they are on the side of right and principle, facing force and self-interest in their most terrible forms. Might may conquer right, and self-interest may conquer principles, temporarily, but they will not conquer in the end. Blessed be the giving, and blessed the sacrifices in this noble, holy crusade!

*WHY DO WE STRUGGLE IN PALESTINE?**

Why do we struggle in Palestine? Why do the Arab peoples throw thousands of their young men into the thick of the fight? Why are the voices of Arab representatives raised in the United Nations and other international meetings in defense of the position of their governments and their peoples? What is the cause for the sake of which we have roused ourselves to struggle with heart, hand, and tongue—even with life itself?

The first answer to this question is that we struggle in order to repel attack and aggression and to defend our existence from the peril of injustice and imperialism. In fact the Arab nation throughout its long history has never been faced by a more serious danger than that to which it is today exposed. The forces which the Zionists control in all parts of the world can, if they are permitted to take root in Palestine, threaten the independence of all the Arab lands and form a continuing and frightening danger to their life. The facilities that the Zionist forces have for growth and expansion will place the Arab world forever at their mercy and will paralyze its vitality and deter its progress and evolution in the ladders of advancement and civilization—that is, if this Arab world is permitted to exist at all.

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In the first place, therefore, we struggle simply to defend ourselves against a treacherous aggression and to protect our very existence. If smooth talkers in the United Nations or elsewhere claim that we have thereby commit-

* Broadcast over the Lebanese Broadcasting Station on the evening of May 31, 1948.

ted an aggressive action, they merely turn events upside down, commit a crime in the sight of truth and history, and register themselves and their allies as the aggressors! In the sight of history no distinction will be made as to whether these smooth talkers represented large or small states, for the curse shall follow them whoever they may be, and one day they shall reap the rewards of their actions because inevitably evil turns on him who commits it and crime returns to envelop the criminal.

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83 Nevertheless, our present struggle has a more important meaning than the one which we have mentioned, a significance which transcends our borders and extends throughout the world and which stretches from the present to the horizons of the future; for we are defending not only our own rights but also principles which are of importance to every people on earth, and which, when fairly judged take on a world-wide coloring and a historical moral. Thus our struggle is linked to the centuries-old human struggle for lasting values and basic human liberties.

We Arabs have the right, or better the duty, to lay bare this widest and deepest of the meanings of our struggle in order to clarify for ourselves and explain to the world the importance of this struggle and in order to put ourselves where we belong, in the procession of those who have fought for right and principle. No other procession gives to human life its full meaning and creates a positive effect on history, for true history consists only of those human values which have been acquired, moral attitudes which have been adopted, and principles which have been elucidated and verified.

The first principle on which our struggle is centered is the right of every people to the land which it inherited

from its fathers and grandfathers and on which it lives. This right entitles a people to exploit the land and to establish in it any system which it chooses, on condition that that system does not encroach on the rights of others. Since the dawn of time man has been trying to achieve this right of self-determination—a purely human principle. Leaders and reformers continue to appeal for its [adoption], and the common people continue to sacrifice both young and old for its sake. If the Arabs today stand up and fight for this principle against Zionist aggression, and if they continue to rise against every manoeuvre and attempt, either present or future, to destroy it or secretly to aggress in its name and under its banner, they not only act so as to preserve their own existence, but they also buttress one of the pillars of secure human life and of true world progress.

The great powers, whose leaders still flaunt the principle of self-determination whenever world conditions reach a crisis and whenever they need the support of small nations, must today clarify their attitude regarding this principle in the present struggle in Palestine, where it is clearly opposed by the power of wealth, politics, and influence. One of the leaders of these great nations said during the last war, "Peace is one and indivisible." Exactly! In the same way right, freedom, and principle are also indivisible unities which have no meaning if they apply to one country or one area to the exclusion of others, or if they are merely hypocritically proclaimed without finding their way into the heart of thought and action. Whatever may be the position of other nations, the Arabs know where they stand in this struggle, and their victory will be a victory for one of society's fundamental principles, and this to the advantage of humanity in its entirety.

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85 The second principle on which the Arab crusade in Palestine is based is religious toleration. The Zionists have deceitfully pictured to the world that the establishment of a Zionist state in Palestine is a solution for the world-wide Jewish problem. In fact, the so-called state will not solve this great problem, but rather make it more complicated and incite nations to doubt the loyalty of their Jewish citizens, to consider them foreigners and to put pressure on them in all ways to emigrate to that deceptive and self-deceiving state. Thus the position of the Jews will continue to oscillate between two loyalties. They will continue to be looked at askance and in fact their position will deteriorate, for they have undertaken something completely erroneous. They have tried to build nationalism on the basis of religion in opposition to what history, political theory, and sociology have established.

No! The worldwide Jewish problem will only be solved on the basis of the spread of religious tolerance and of the strengthening of the principles of human dignity through political, economic, and social effort. Further, it is linked to the popular struggle against external and internal imperialism and against any exclusive claim that might diminish either group or individual freedom. This is a world-wide problem, the overcoming of which depends on the readiness of the Jews themselves for assimilation with the rest of mankind and on the victory of the principles of freedom of thought and belief—principles which are relevant not only for Jews, but for every individual, group, and religious community.

In their defense of religious toleration and freedom of belief the Arabs are only following their tradition. For throughout history they have extended to the Jews a degree of freedom not given them by any other people. During the era of Arab supremacy the followers of Judaism

reached a degree of power and importance which they did not attain in any other state. The Arabs continue to proclaim their willingness to live with the Jews under the shelter of a common democratic rule in which the Jews will dispose of all rights to which their numbers entitle them and will enjoy the same rights and duties as the Arabs, a desideratum which in fact is still not a reality in many nations of the world.

By bringing about democratic freedoms in this way the Jewish problem will be solved. By focusing attention on the real solution of the problem and by removing the veil of hypocrisy from those nations that profess to defend the Jews but at the same time close their doors to them, the Arabs are, in this struggle to prevent the establishment of a Zionist state in Palestine, serving these same freedoms. The Arab crusade in Palestine is against this and similar unrighteousness, a struggle to solve the religious problem on a sound basis and to realize those fundamental liberties which the defenders of Zionism are so very far from realizing. In fact by their defense of Zionism the latter are, either from ignorance or by design, acting to weaken and destroy those liberties. 86

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The final and most comprehensive principle on which the Arab crusade in Palestine is centered is the victory of principle over interest in world organization. The world is today witnessing the worst comedy that history has seen. It sees an international organization, which includes most of the nations of the world, impotent to solve a single international problem. The United Nations, with its General Assembly, Security Council, and Trusteeship Council, is still unable to solve a single one of the disputes which have split humanity and which threaten a horrible new war: in Korea, China, Indonesia, India, Iran, Palestine, Greece,

and Germany, in fact in every sensitive spot on earth. This is mainly because the member nations continue to place interest above principle, and the great powers in particular continue to be directed by a passion for domination and monopoly, not by any desire to realize sound values in the life of peoples and in their relationships one with the other. Standing in the face of interest and political greed, the Arabs in their present defensive effort serve not only themselves but the whole world and contribute their share towards awakening mankind to its only safe road, the road of firm and fundamental principles, not of fluctuating interests and oppressive greed.

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No country in the world enjoys the same universal value as Palestine. Palestine did not acquire its position in history through its natural characteristics or its material resources, but rather because of the lofty human values and noble principles which have emanated from it and illuminated the whole world. The Arab crusade today takes on its true meaning only in this framework and in the light of this truth. It is indeed an Arab crusade carried on to guard the independence and existence of the Arabs, but in addition—in fact I will say first and foremost—it is a human crusade of universal significance which will, I hope, continue to further the positive tradition of Palestine by imparting sound values and by defending principles, freedoms, and basic human responsibilities.

